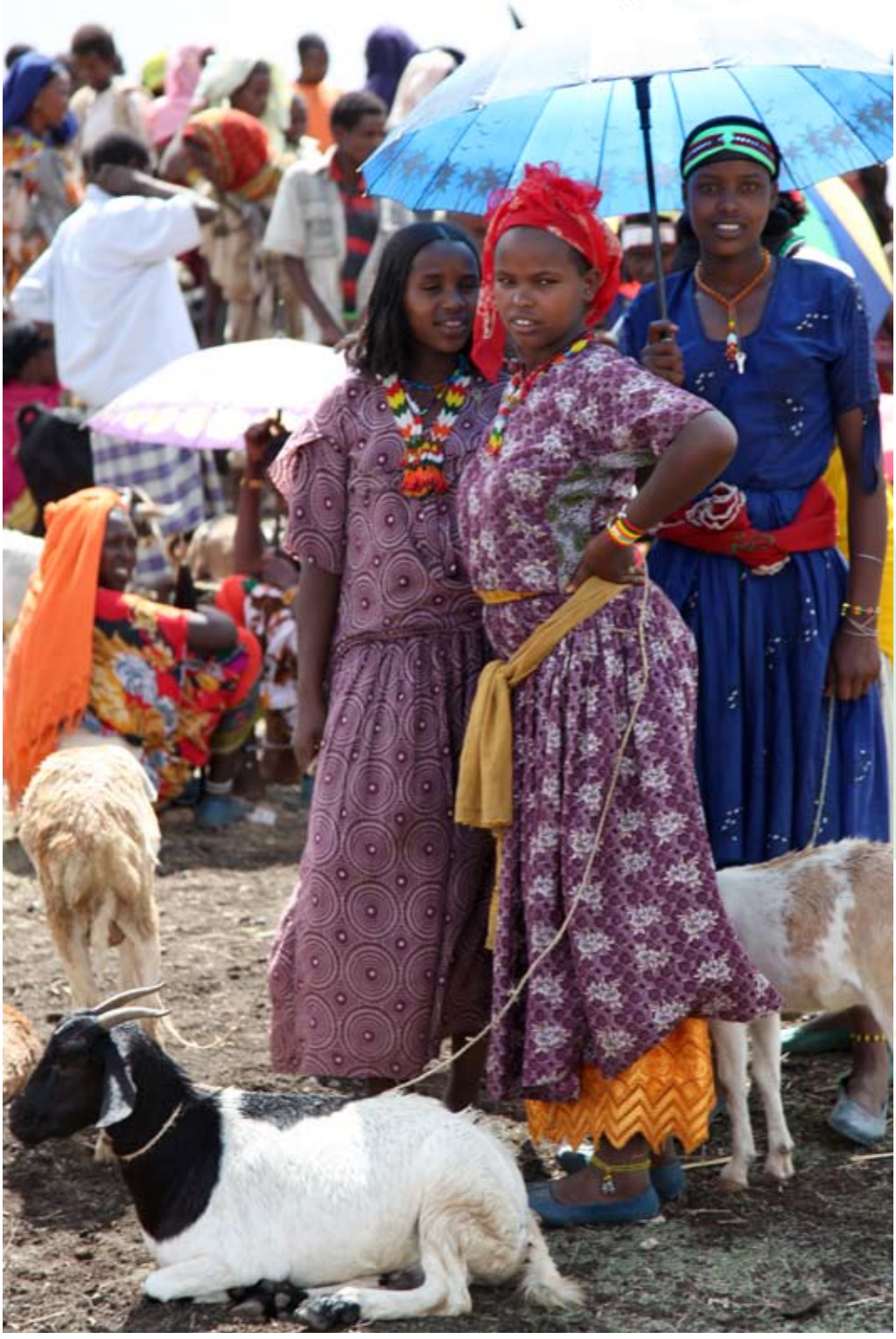
Gender



Empowering women through value chain development: Good practices and lessons from IPMS experiences

Background

There have been few studies concerning women in Ethiopia, but many observers have commented on the physical hardship that Ethiopian women experience throughout their lives. Such hardship involves carrying firewood and water over long distances on a daily basis, grinding corn manually, working in the homestead, raising children, and cooking. Ethiopian women traditionally have suffered sociocultural and economic discrimination and have had fewer opportunities than men for personal growth, education, and employment.

Over 85 per cent of Ethiopian women reside in rural areas, where peasant families are engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture. Rural women are integrated into the predominantly agricultural rural economy, which is labour intensive and exacts a heavy physical toll on all, including children. Land reform did not change their subordinate status, which was based on deep-rooted traditional values and beliefs. An improvement in economic conditions would improve the standard of living of women, but real change would require a transformation of the attitudes regarding women.

Even though Ethiopian women make a significant contribution to the agricultural sector, as women in others parts of the developing world, they usually have no or limited access to and control over important agricultural resources such as land, livestock, farm implements, capital, knowledge and information, which constrains their role in and contribution to production and marketing of agricultural commodities.

A recent review of 271 World Bank projects by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), found that, when projects address the needs of both men and women, the sustainability of project outcomes increases by 16% (Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010). Unless deliberate measures have been put in place to provide women all the required information, knowledge and skills in improving agricultural productivity and marketing initiatives, it is unrealistic to expect sustainable agricultural growth.

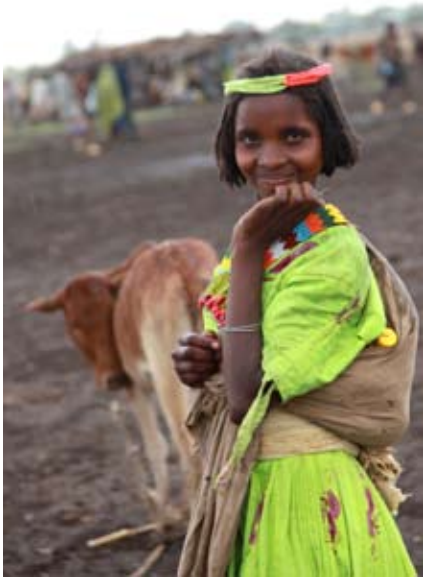
This document reports on IPMS experiences of gender mainstreaming to reach women to increase their access to resources, technologies and knowledge which could consequently improve their economic and social status. It presents a number of strategies employed and specific cases thereof to illustrate the outcomes and challenges associated. Findings are based on studies undertaken by the IPMS gender research team and Research and Development Officers in 10 pilot learning woredas (PLWs) located in four regions of the country.

Gender analysis as the first step

IPMS recognized that an understanding of the gender context to identify opportunities for supporting gender equality through market-led agricultural development initiatives will be central to successful project implementation and sustainability. Consequently, the project undertook a gender analysis of the project's priority commodities including understanding dimensions of social capital and networks; access to technologies and services as a first step. The gender analysis had three specific objectives:

- to increase the understanding of the different roles of women and men in agricultural production, marketing and decision-making, and their share in the benefits;
- to identify potential barriers for women's and men's participation in market-led development initiatives and technology adoption; and
- to identify what actions may be required by the project in order to overcome some of these barriers.

The findings from the study provided evidence on the role of women along the value chain for priority crop and livestock commodities and formed the basis for designing interventions for integrating gender into the IPMS project activities. Some of these interventions included organization of gender awareness events like stakeholder workshops for partners at the woreda level; working with the woreda offices to develop gender-sensitive PLW action plans; undertaking gender-focused research and; identifying gender-sensitive indicators for project monitoring.



Gender division of labour in crop and livestock production

The gender analysis for arable crops, livestock and perennial crops indicated that, although the division of tasks varies between commodities and between locations, it is possible to make some broad generalizations regarding the typical division of labour between women and men in crop and livestock production (Lemlem et al 2010).

Arable crops: Men are typically responsible for the heavier manual tasks in crop production such as land preparation and tillage with oxen. Men play a dominant role in seed selection, reflecting their better access to information. They also perform jobs of broadcasting seed and fertilizer. Men are usually responsible for threshing and winnowing cereal crops.

Women are often involved with activities that require dexterity and attention to detail, such as raising seedlings in nurseries, transplanting and weeding. They are also involved with activities closely associated with their household responsibilities, such as storage, processing and adding value.

Livestock: Men play a key role in management of high value livestock enterprises such as cattle, small ruminants, apiculture and camels. They are also responsible for tasks that require networking and activities outside the home, such as accessing information, breeding, rearing and animal health, particularly in terms of accessing modern health services. They are also involved in heavier manual activities like housing and slaughtering.

Women in livestock production are typically engaged in activities related to the safety and wellbeing of the livestock that are performed around the homestead, such as collecting dung and maintaining hygiene. They are also involved with activities closely related to their household activities and are often responsible for storing, processing and adding value to the livestock products. The tasks of feeding and watering livestock are often shared and other household members may also participate.

Perennial crops: With regard to perennial crops (such as coffee or fruit trees), men tend to do most of the heavy manual labour, including land clearance, tillage, nursery, weeding and pruning. Wives assist with manuring, soil conservation, harvesting and management, depending on the region. Women's participation is greater when the trees are planted close to the home.

Gender roles in marketing and sharing the benefits of crop and livestock production

Control over the benefits of production also varies between women and men, partly reflecting their labour input, but also reflecting the use of produce at home or for sale, cultural norms regarding 'women's' and 'men's' enterprises, and also influenced by the wealth of the household.

Generally there is an imbalance between workloads and share in the benefits of production. Men tend to control the income from many crop and livestock commodities where they dominate or share the workload such as field crops, vegetables, tree crops and large ruminants.

There are also enterprises in which women and men share both the workloads and the benefits like pulses, fruit trees, butter, cattle and poultry depending on the woreda. In contrast, there are very few enterprises in which women dominate both the workloads and the control of the benefits; the exceptions are pepper in Fogera and poultry in several sites.

However, women control the income from few commodities arising from joint endeavors, such as fruit trees in Alamata, and dairy products in Atsbi-Wemberta, Fogera, Ada'a Liben, Dale and Alaba.

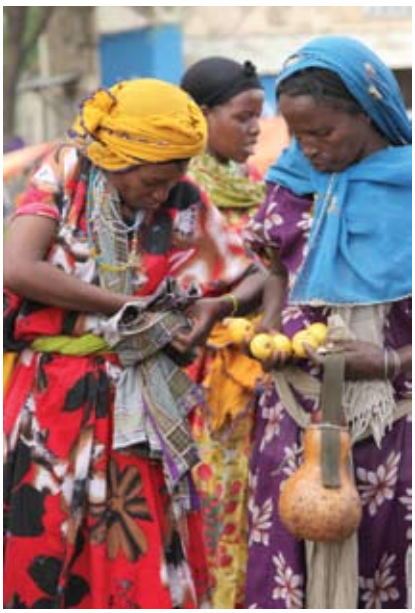
Gender based differences in accessing agricultural services

Even though women play a significant role in agricultural productivity, carrying out an estimated 40% to 60% of all agricultural labour (World Bank 2008a), they suffer from unequal access to resources and capacity-building opportunities on a number of levels. With no regular updates about new farming practices and few opportunities to develop their skills base, they have to rely on information being passed on to them from their husbands, other men, or ideas gleaned through their informal networks which marginalizes

The analysis of men and women's social and information networks also clearly demonstrates that women have limited access to information, technologies and opportunities for knowledge and skills development. This has serious implications for promoting agricultural development as this reflects on their knowledge and skill acquisition and decision making to produce and market agricultural commodities. Adoption of technologies among poorer households, including female headed, is also inhibited by an inability to afford the technology coupled with limited availability of credit or savings, and low levels of awareness.

Only in female-headed households do women control the decisions regarding use of agricultural technologies; yet this still tends to be in consultation with their male relatives.

Based on the gender analysis, IPMS designed strategies to involve women in the project activities with the aim of increasing their access to knowledge and information; enhancing their capacity, both technical and non-technical; and increase their participation in the selected value chains. While some of the strategies were commodity specific, some were more general. The following sections highlight the strategies employed by the project.



Non commodity specific strategies

The findings of the gender analysis were developed into gender commodity fact sheets[1] and circulated widely. Ideas sheets[2] were developed providing a menu of options to address the identified constraints in increasing women's participation in market-oriented agricultural production.

Realising that the awareness and skills of woreda and kebele level MoARD staff was critical for integrating gender in these efforts, a series of woreda level workshops were held to highlight the issues from the gender analysis as a prelude to taking up gendered PLW action plans. It was observed that the front level workers (Development Agents) had minimal exposure to the skills required for effectively integrating gender into their work, training was designed and delivered to enhance their capacity in this aspect, focusing on practical tools that they could use for this purpose, including some monitoring tools.

Increase women's access to knowledge and skills about market-oriented agricultural production, services and inputs

As mentioned, before access to information for women is limited and therefore the project designed various strategies which open up options to increase women's access to information, knowledge and specific skills in commodity development chains. Because the project strongly believed that provision of the necessary knowledge and skills is a central component for increasing productivity and effective marketing.

The basic strategy used by IPMS to increase women's participation in knowledge sharing and capacity building activities like training, field visits and other interventions in value chain development was to set a target of 50% for their participation. During the project implementation (2006-2010), about 36% of women farmers from FHH and MHH were reached through the capacity building activities in project sites. Targeting women means empowering them for their economic independence and enhancement of their participation in social and economic development of their communities.

Importance of venue and timing of training

Women are not only the major source of labour in the agricultural sector and contributor for community related activities but they are also responsible for the vital household tasks such as caring of children, cooking, fetching water and fuelwood and cleaning the house as part of their household responsibilities. The gender baseline survey revealed also that women are responsible for many tasks and they work for 10-12 hours per day both in the wet and dry seasons. So it is very important to consider their daily calendar to identify the most convenient time and place while organizing the training.

Unlike the conventional extension approaches, the project delivered the trainings in a place near to their village selected by the women themselves, in the case of Dale, Goma, Ada, Atsbi, Alamata, Fogera and Bure. This strategy enabled a larger number of women to attend trainings comfortably. Most trainings were also hands-on including practical demonstrations, rather than theoretical or conceptual exposures, which was highly appreciated by the trainees.

Couples training

It is often assumed that there is a trickle down of information, ideas, skills and knowledge from husbands to wives. This led to women, particularly the married ones, not being invited to trainings, meetings and other similar fora. Considering this problem, the project adopted an innovative training approach called 'couples training'.

'Couples' training' is an approach where both husbands and wives are trained together. It widens opportunities for women to get the necessary information, skills and knowledge for the production and marketing of agricultural commodities. Partners also understand, assist and appreciate each other technically so that they gradually build up their knowledge together, thereby overcoming the weakness of relying on husbands to pass information to their wives after training. It helps women strengthen their role in decision-making in the household regarding which technologies to use and which marketable commodities to produce. It also helps breaking taboos about the traditional gender division of labour and contributes to bringing about gender equality (N. Alemayehu, RDO and H. Gudeta, RDA, Ada'a Liben PLW).

1 http://www.ipms-ethiopia.org/Focus-Area/Gender/Fact-Sheet/adaa-Liben.asp

2 http://www.ipms-ethiopia.org/content/files/Documents/publications/Gender/IPMS%20ideas%20sheet%20for%20gender%20mainstreaming%20in%20PLW%20activities_English%20Nov%202007.doc

Experience Sharing

Experience sharing events are powerful tools to spread new technologies among farmers and effective ways of demonstrating new ways of producing and marketing of certain commodities and, inspiring women to adopt new ways of working. IPMS experiences showed that study tours and field days enabled many women to become aware of, adopt, manage and master new technologies successfully.

Kassu, Bure: Visiting IPMS sites

Through IPMS I have attended training in fruit nursery grafting (along with 10 men) and have received fruit scions and pepper seedlings for demonstration purposes. I also had the chance to join an experience sharing visit when 10 of us (three women and seven men) travelled for 14 days through Ethiopia, visiting

IPMS sites in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR. The trip was like a dream. I did not imagine I would ever have the chance to visit these places, given my current status as a widow. I had been out of Bure woreda only once before, to Bahir Dar. On this trip I saw many things that I want to follow up: poultry, fruit and vegetables. I have already adopted some of ideas I have seen, such as urban agriculture techniques.

Access to other inputs and services

Access to capital is one of the major constraints that hinders women entrepreneurs from adopting new enterprises and technologies which require investments. Though a number of affirmative policies are in place in the micro-finance organizations to provide credit services to women, but in practice many women could not be benefit from the opportunity as the micro-finance demands feasible and viable project proposals which can ensure repayment by the women. IPMS project together with the respective OoARD in the PLWs assisted the community including women in the preparation of the credit proposals that could help the women access loans to engage in the business. In addition, many women refrain from taking loans as they feel their knowledge and skills will not enable them to commercialise their production and earn profit. Recognizing these issues, IPMS tried to reach out to women through innovative credit scheme[3], which was administered through the existing microfinance organizations in the area to institutionalize the innovative credit scheme to ensure the sustainability of the approaches; examples are credit provided to women for pullet production and marketing in Dale, small ruminant fattening in Miesso and Goma.

Access to input and output markets

Technology and inputs utilization provide an opportunity to improve enterprises led by women, leading to increases in production, to produce new or different products with higher value added, or to products of higher quality (Everts 1999). Such improvement could lead to higher profits and to greater security and autonomy for women. Women generally faced a lot of difficulties with purchasing inputs and the negotiation processes thereof. IPMS tried to create linkages amongst input suppliers (private or co-operatives) and women and men farmers in the respective PLWs, along with the provisions of necessary training and credit. In Goma, women engaged in sheep fattening were linked with feed suppliers; in Dale poultry rearing women were linked with buyers; fruit seedling producers in Goma, Dale and Bure were linked with farmers, dairy farmers in Alamata and Ada were linked with dairy cooperatives, Miesso goat fattening groups linked with market.

Identification and promotion of technologies suitable for women

Culturally, important households' resources such as land, traction animals and farm implements are entitled to men. Women are also traditionally prohibited to perform cultivation using animal traction. As a consequence, female headed households who own farm land with traction animals to draw the plough have to either hire male labour for cash or exchange their oxen for labour to produce agricultural products. It is therefore important to tackle such cultural barriers through the identification and promotion of appropriate technologies.

Conservation tillage

All land in Bure and Metema woredas is ploughed three to four times prior to planting, using a pair of oxen, and followed by a final ploughing to cover the sown seeds. Usually, the head of the household ploughs and another man broadcasts the seed. Majority of the female headed households

3The innovation credit fund finances innovations in production, input supply, technologies and services not normally covered by the existing lending institutions

either own only one ox or none and this seriously hampers their ability to plough their land. Women and children do the weeding. Conservation tillage, made possible through the use of bio degradable herbicides, is one of the technologies demonstrated in Bure and Metema PLWs. In Bure IPMS, in collaboration with the woreda OoARD, introduced the technology in the woredas and organized training for couples, field demonstration to farmers including female headed households.

In Metema conservation tillage also demonstrated as a labour and time saving technology targeted at both men and women for land preparation and weed clearance. Certainly conservation tillage brings a ray of hope to women who are now able to use bio degradable herbicide which minimizes weed infestation and the women's and family labour requirement for weed clearance. Under conservation tillage, all the pre-broadcast ploughing is replaced by spraying (which was performed by men); only the ploughing to cover the broadcast seed remains.

'After the couple's training, it was easy to adopt the new approach because we could make the decision together. As a result of the training, I have become more involved, especially regarding the spray mix and the preparation of seed for planting'. Ababayehu Adam , Bure

This technology helps women to minimize their labour requirement as they have to hire labour and oxen only once as compared to the traditional practice which is 3 to 4 times per crop cycle. They are not forced to share out or rent out their land. This has a considerable impact on saving women's time for other productive activities

Aregash, Female headed farmers , Metema

"After the demonstration of the conservation tillage through the application of round up chemical I developed interest to use the technology and decided to purchase the knapsack sprayer and the chemical. I have my own sprayer and spray myself. I found it very helpful to save my labour and money that would have been invested on labour for weeding. In addition it helps me to grow more tef. The chemical is really left out our burden 'Gelagelen' ."

Breaking the mould through women's ploughing

Ploughing with oxen has traditionally been a man's activity in Ethiopia. The gender baseline information collected across 10 PLWs confirmed that women are not involved in drawing the plough using oxen traction, while they can prepare land using hand tools for hoeing. This tradition is a threat particularly for female headed households who do not have grown up sons and men relatives. Furthermore, women in female headed households usually own fewer livestock than men and than women in male headed households (Torkelsson and Tassew 2008). Thus, female headed households who have a considerable size of land with few or no traction animals cannot fully utilize their potential to produce agricultural commodities for consumption and market.

Considering this fundamental problem, IPMS in collaboration with the woreda OoARD and Women's Affair Offices explored the opportunity of breaking this norm and started demonstrating women ploughing.

W/o Abeba: an innovative farmer

Abeba was working on activities like ploughing farm lands, and harvesting crops together with her father. She also played football, volley ball, and other sports with equal competence as male students in school. As a result, her teachers and students appreciated her in all activities. On the other hand, some of her friends and farmers in the village said that she was *out of our culture.*

She followed a women's training on gender equality and negotiation training including oxen plough demonstration organized by IPMS and woredas women's affairs office in Bure in 2008, then discussed with her husband on ways of improving their income and livelihood. They were producing only a total of 20 quintal of maize and wheat from 0.75 ha of land which is estimate to be 4000 birr a year. After the training, they acquired land through renting and crop share system and cultivated

2.25ha of land in 2009. This enabled them to produce 30 q maize, 6 q wheat, and 12 q pepper in 2009. In 2010, they produced 35 q maize, 15 q wheat and 10 q of pepper. This produce has given a gross revenue of 24,000 birr per annum.

This increased income came from the integrated effort of both husband and wife. She helped him in oxen ploughing, sowing seed, going to market. On his side, he helped her in managing the child, making a traditional wot and collecting fuel wood, managing chickens in the evening and even washing cloths and utensils.

Recognition of women's achievements

Apart from producing evidence-based gender materials such as gender idea sheets and commodity fact sheets to raise the awareness of development practitioners, the project recognized women's achievements through various events in order to change peoples mind set about the potential of women farmers.

Sheep fattening contest

In Goma, 120 farmers were to be engaged to start sheep fattening business, through promoting supplementary feeding of sheep and providing loans to buy the feed concentrates. It was aimed to have 50 % women's participation in this intervention. However, the project ended up with only 32 % women participants as the community leaders who are in charge of selecting farmers did not believe in the capacity of women to manage the enterprise profitably and repay their loan.

During the intervention, it was observed that most of the women engaged in the fattening program outshined the majority of men who were participating. Recognizing this, the project decided to showcase this reality to the community through organizing a sheep fattening contest.

In a sheep fattening contest organized by IPMS, wereda OoARD and women's affairs office, out of 120 fatteners the first and the second best performers chosen were women. They were awarded 1 quintal of feed for their next round sheep fattening. This contest was an opportunity for the community members and leaders to recognize and understand women's ability to manage agricultural enterprises as commercial and viable ventures. As a result, the proportion of women participating in the 2nd and 3rd rounds of sheep fattening exceeded 50 %.

Misku: Sheep sale brings recognition in the community

Misku Abafaris, is a 42 year old farmer with high school education who lives in Goma woreda. When she was in 9th grade, she was married to a farmer from the community and she now has five children. Misku and her group members who are involved in sheep fattening, received five sheep each on credit and were trained on sheep fattening and rearing by IPMS and woreda OoARD . In one year, she was able to sell 12 sheep in two cycles. Misku appreciated the supplementary feeding technology used, because she was able to fatten her sheep in a much shorter time compared to the traditional practice.

She played a key role in integrating the sheep fattening with other farming and domestic activities. She makes decisions in the house with her husband, and was able to control the income from sale. Misku said "I am not waiting for my husband to give me money for household or any other expenses, this is a big change for me ".

Her success and the additional income have made her popular in her community; she was awarded for her good performance in sheep management in a sheep fattening contest organized by woredas OoARD and IPMS. Misku was given one quintal of concentrate (feed). She was very delighted because her work brought her more than money, "recognition in her community".

Women's field day in Ada'a

In Ada'a pilot learning woreda, women's field day was organized by woreda OoARD and IPMS where women farmers from all PAs in the woreda were invited to visit champion women farmers who engaged in dairy, vegetable and apiculture production and marketing. This event provided opportunity for fellow women farmers in the woreda to demonstrate how women can be successful if they utilized the knowledge and skills they acquired.

Commodity specific strategies

The commodity fact sheets[4] developed for the priority commodities in all PLWs based on the gender analysis provided detailed information on the role of women and men in the production and marketing of these commodities. Based on an analysis of the tasks women are responsible for in various commodities, their ability to make decisions and control income/ benefits from commodities and factors influencing the same, the project designed commodity specific strategies to increase their involvement in the production and marketing of agricultural commodities.

Strengthening enterprises traditionally undertaken by women

Even if men are generally the key players in crop and livestock production, and are the principal beneficiaries in terms of control over the income generated from the sale of the commodities, there are some deviations from this general trend in which women take part in the production of some commodities and earn benefits from their sale.

All across IPMS pilot learning woredas, the gender analysis revealed that commodities like poultry and dairy are some of the commodities where women either dominate the workload and income or dominate the workload but share the income with men.

In order to increase women's engagement in the commercialization of agricultural commodities, IPMS in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development (MoARD) tried to increase the productivity and marketing of poultry and dairy production through the introduction of new technologies and creating market linkage. The project targeted women specifically to make sure that they were not marginalized.

Introduction of technologies for poultry

Poultry production does not require much land and capital. Poultry is also a source of self-reliance, since poultry and egg sales are decided by women and provide them with an immediate cash income to meet household expenses.

The gender baseline survey undertaken by IPMS revealed that women are responsible for most of the production activities such as hatching, rearing, hygiene, feeding, watering, protection and egg collection. They also control the income from the sale of eggs and chicken, except in Bure and Alaba where both the workload and the income are shared between men and women. Though in all PLWs more than 50 % of the produce is sold, chickens are produced on a small scale and using traditional management practices. Producers tend to prefer low productive local breeds which require lower levels of management. As a result, women earn low income from the enterprise.

Considering this, the project strived to improve the productivity and the marketing of poultry through the introduction of various context specific technologies. Raising a day old chicks to twenty weeks was one of the technologies introduced in Dale woreda where the public poultry supply system to urban and periurban farmers is proving to be inadequate to meet with the ever growing demand for commercial egg layers.

An out growers' scheme was initiated by IPMS and the woreda office of agriculture with the participation of 80 women. Each woman was provided on credit a hay brooder box with a runner, 50 day old chickens and feed provided to last three months. Village level training and continuous technical support was provided by the woreda office of agriculture and IPMS. Women vaccinated their chickens under the guidance and supervision of regional and woreda veterinarians.

Women organized in groups and backed by a sound business plan could successfully become part of the poultry value chain as suppliers of pullets and knowledge for sustainable market oriented agricultural development.

These chickens were sold to 173 periurban producers and 400 rural households. On an average each woman/hh earned gross income of Birr 1071.78 in three months.

Identifying women in the value chain as input suppliers, in this case pullets, and women themselves vaccinating their chickens was either thought to be not possible or was not taken seriously. Unlike many projects in the woreda, it is the first of its kind which mainly focused on women since they receive the loan and totally own the enterprise. It has improved their esteem and received attention from extension service.

4 http://www.ipms-ethiopia.org/Focus-Area/Gender/Fact-Sheet/adaa-Liben.asp

Radia Tomsisa: Going forward with poultry management

Radia Tomsisa is one of the eighty women involved in raising day old chicks in Dale. One year ago IPMS trained women in her area on poultry management which she was part of and after eight months she was provided with fifty seven days old chicks. To take the chicks she had to make 150 ETB initial payment. Her husband, her older son and her contributed 50 each and took the chicks. After 90 days she sold the 49 chickens at 50 birr and paid back her 1300 birr loan. She made a net profit of 1150 birr and she gave 200 birr each to her husband and son because they helped her with the initial payment and she took the rest of the money because she was the only one who was taking care of the chickens. With her 200 birr she bought a goat and her son bought a 'tiga' (calf). The chicks which were provided to her grew faster compared to the local chickens she was used to raising.

Supporting the development of traditionally women-dominated commodities like poultry is a good entry point.

Improving the productivity of dairy

Demand for dairy products appears to be rising in the recent years across PLWs. Dairy is another marketable commodity where women have close engagement in the production and marketing of products. It is the women who sell milk and butter and control the income from dairy products. However, the community rears the indigenous breed that produces small amounts of milk in open grazing systems, probably because of very limited awareness about improved breeds and their availability. The introduction of crossbred or improved dairy breed and supplementary feed has the potential to contribute to increased productivity of the dairy sector and women's income.

Encourage women in feed and forage development

Intervention on feed in the rural areas, like forage development, either in the backyard or in grazing land has a significant effect on women's income. Mainly because at the household level the feed produced is fed to lactating cows which leads to an increase in the milk and butter production. The women churn the butter and sell it, and also control the income from butter in all PLWs.

Raso Usman, Feed farmer in Miesso

Raso Usman from Miesso woreda has been involved in forage production for three years. She was approached by IPMS based on her past experience with local breed cattle and forage development. However, as the milk yield was quite low, she decided to switch to a better breed called "Borena", which require more feed to give better yield. In 2009 Raso started planting forage in one hectare of land intercropped with sorghum, with the support of IPMS and MoARD. The main objective for adopting this technology was to be able to feed her animals well. As a result, the milk production increased from 1 l/day to 3 lit/day.

She was able to feed all her cattle throughout the dry season. With the help of IPMS, Raso also tried MUB (Mollases Urea Block) preparation at her back yard, but she did not continue, because of lack of molasses and Urea. She suggests that the materials required for adopting a technology should be available and regular follow up should take place to see the impact.

Farmers in the neighbourhood come to visit her cattle and wonder how she is able to feed the animals considering the cost of feed, but she tells them that if animals are well managed (fed properly, maintain hygiene and drench timely) they fetch a better price that would cover their expenses, and also allow her to make a profit.

Promotion of technologies and commodities requiring lower amount of resources

Women have no or limited access to and control over the important agricultural resources such as land and farm tools. It is their husbands who administer the land and decide how to use it and what to produce. The majority of marketable commodities such as cereals and pulses require relatively large size of land and it is difficult to engage women from male headed households for producing such agricultural commodities, while it is relatively easy to target women from female headed households who have better access to and control over their land holdings.

In order to increase women's engagement in producing and marketing of agricultural commodities, it is important to focus on commodities which do not require large size of land. Backyard fruit seedling production was identified as an enterprise that does not demand large size of land and lumpy inputs, and therefore is suitable for women given their resource constraints.

IPMS introduced improved fruit seedling production through grafting targeting women in Goma, Dale and Bure. The grafting technique is intended to tackle one of the major bottlenecks of fruit production in the woredas - the different fruit varieties introduced to Goma PLW by the community were from unknown sources and with no information regarding their management. This resulted in failure to set fruit, extended periods for fruits setting (can take above seven years), unmanageable height, diseases, pests, etc.

Fruit seedling production

In Goma, six model farmers (3 female, 3 male) were trained and engaged in grafting avocado and produced 2,052 grafted avocado seedlings from internationally known varieties such as Hass, Ettinger, and Fuerte which were sold to 163 households in 28 Peasant Associations (PAs) at Birr 25 per seedling. The farmers earned Birr 42,000 amongst them in total. The three female farmers were engaged in the fruit nursery operation but all activities were shared with their spouses. One of them was used to farming activities in addition to household chores, but two of them were not involved in farming activities before. Since their engagement in fruits seedling production, these women started to work directly in farm activities, such as collecting soil, filling polybags and making shades with their spouses. Despite the additional workload, all the female operators expressed their satisfaction due to the intervention.

Kedija Yasin: the fruit seedlings producer

W/o Kedija Yasin from Goma is a 36 years old married woman who has 6 children. Her husband was an accountant with a monthly salary of 350 Birr but lost his job in 2006. While she was exploring possible income generation activities, she was approached in 2008 by IPMS and woredas OoARD for grafted fruit seedling production. She got a 5 days training in grafting techniques by Melkassa agricultural research experts along with other farmers. Immediately after the training she engaged in the seedling production and planted the root stock using the knowledge she obtained from the training. In the following year, she grafted 300 avocado seedlings using the scion supplied from Melkassa but only 50% of the grafted seedlings survived.

'The knowledge and the skills I got make me and my family confident enough to make money and secure our livelihood. Everyone in the village was aware of our situation when my husband lost his job. That is why many farmers, both men and women, are interested in my achievement'

According to Kedija, the scion taken from Melkassa lost its moisture on the way, which explains the mortality. She also mentioned that it will not happen again as she has planted 4 mother trees (one from each variety-Hass, Fruitte, Eteger and Bakan) that can be used as her own source of scion for the future. After two and a half years, she got 10 kg of avocado from one of the mother trees and used the fruit for consumption. In December 2010 she sold about 300 improved grafted avocado seedlings at 25 Birr per seedling and earned 7500 Birr. With this money, she bought a heifer at 600 Birr. She now covers her children school expenses, clothes and other household expenses.

Increase women's participation in commodities where they share responsibilities but not reward

The IPMS gender analysis indicated that women play a significant role in the production of small ruminants; however women have little or no involvement in marketing and do not generally control the income from their sale. IPMS targeted women to provide them with the required technical knowledge, credit and increased their access to inputs and market to ensure that they are able to engage in the business and control income they earn.

Small ruminant fattening

In Miesso, women along with their husbands engage in sheep and goat rearing, feeding and day to day management and are also solely responsible for maintaining hygiene and dung collection. But in most cases, they are either excluded from selling and controlling the income from their sales or, they jointly control the sales and income with their husbands. IPMS attempted to devise ways that would help women benefit from goat development and targeted 189 women in three groups. The project channeled credit through Oromia Credit and Saving Share company (OCSSCo) and each woman received 450 birr to purchase 2 to 4 goats and fatten in 3 cycles per year and, repay the loan after a year. In addition to the credit, they were trained in business skills, saving, and goat fattening. They fed their goats green stover, wheat bran, roasted sorghum and maize flour in order to shorten the fattening period.

Kedija Yayo, Sada Huso, Alia Mohamed, Meka Huso, Zahra Abulemit and Dahab are members of 'Hawi Gudian' group in Miesso and each got a loan of 450 birr each for goat fattening in October 2009 from the IPMS credit fund channeled through OCSSCo. Using the credit fund and the technical training they got, they fattened 6 to 8 goats each in 2 cycles in the first 6 months and got a net profit of 1000 to 1600 Birr per household. Because of the training, credit and group formation these women became independent goat fatteners who control the decision regarding the purchase and sales of goats and, utilization of income from the sale of goats. By doing that they increased their capital (450 birr) to 2500 to 4000 birr in a year and managed to repay their loan on time.

Explore opportunities for women's participation in men-dominated commodities

Many historical, cultural, physical and other reasons strictly keep out women in either the production or marketing of certain commodities. Examples of these are bee keeping and cattle fattening. It is important to understand the reasons and explore possibilities for breaking such barriers, where desirable.

The introduction of modern beehives changes the scenario

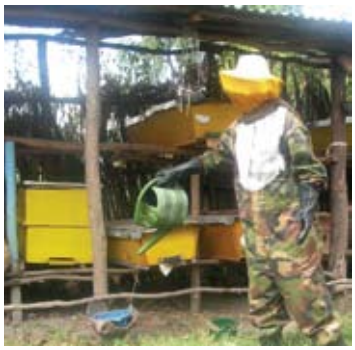
Traditionally women were excluded from the production and marketing of honey in many parts of the country. One of the reasons for this is that in the traditional beekeeping system, the beehives have to be hanged on the tips of tree branches. Men are perceived to be physically fit to climb the tree and put the beehives at the right place. Secondly, in the traditional bee keeping system the beehives are preferably kept in the forest which is not safe for the women to cross alone.

However, in the modern bee keeping system, the modern and the transitional beehives can be kept around the homestead near the ground, under shade. Hence women can potentially manage the day to day management of bees and engage in the business as long as they have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources for the production and marketing of honey.

In Fogera woreda, to improve women's participation in apiculture production and marketing, IPMS project, together with partners, initiated a couple training. Couple training was very important in this case as it improves the household level decision making process. As a result, women's participation increased following the training. The field assessment also shows that, though there are still cultural influences, the trend of women's involvement in beekeeping has been increasing gradually with effective back up from field workers in the village.

According to many beekeepers, the new beekeeping technologies can be very easily handled by women compared to traditional hives. In case of top-bar hive, plastering of the hive, fumigation, protecting the colonies from ants and spiders; internal inspection, etc. can be easily done by women. Even in the absence of their husbands, instead of asking neighboring men for help, they can easily harvest the honey.

So far, however, the marketing channel for honey from modern hives is poorly developed, resulting in a price differential. Better linkages for honey need to be developed.



Elfnesh, model beekeeper inAda

W/ro Elfnesh Dermeji from Ada district who got married at a young age, learnt bee-keeping from her father in-law who worked as a bee-keeper for land owners in the area. Four years ago when Development agents (DA) approached her she got trained on modern and transitional beehives, bee forage and supplementary feeding. She also learnt how to keep the beehives clean and how to keep the bees from leaving by providing them water near their hives.

She was provided with credit and paid off her loan. Apart from apiculture, W/ro Elfnesh works on the field, holds 4 ha of land and has rented 3 more and cultivates beans, teff, wheat and peas. She has 2 cows, 6 sheep, 2 chickens and 4 donkeys.

She started with 3 traditional beehives, but now has 9 transitional , 3 modern and 4 traditional beehives. She produces honey twice a year. Last year she has produced 210 kg and sold it at 40 birr per kg. She says apiculture is very easy, one has to watch the beehives carefully, keep them clean, prepare supplementary feeding in the dry season and have plants around so that the bees do not have to navigate a long distance in search of feed and water and get lost in the process.

She is planning to broaden her modern apiery because she would want to continue with this work in her older days. She is a model farmer and received various equipments as awards.

Encourage women to produce large ruminants

Cattle are reared mainly for sale in all pilot learning woredas and is typically a male dominated enterprise. Though some activities are shared by men and women in some sites, such as hay making in Metema and Fogera, fodder collection in Miesso, breeding, feeding and day-to-day management in Ada'a, it is men who sell the fattened cattle and control the income from the sale.

In Metema where IPMS introduced credit and stall feeding interventions, a group of men and women were trained in fattening large ruminants. Women involved were mostly widows and stall feeding seemed to be attractive to them because the animals (zebus which are preferred by the neighboring Sudanese) were close to home to be fed. After 3 months fattening, the animals gain weight and sell better. However, even though the process of engagement with farmers and traders seemed to be established and there were market opportunities, many challenges were faced: lack of skills and knowledge, livestock diseases, difficulties with quarantine, feed shortage during dry season (despite the available vast communal range lands), weak export market and limited credit availability to support the business.

Raising cattle closer to home in Metema

W/ro Enanye engaged in cattle fattening, after inheriting cattle from her late husband. A 35 year old widow and mother of four, Enanye was first approached for cattle fattening business through the woreda OoARD staff.

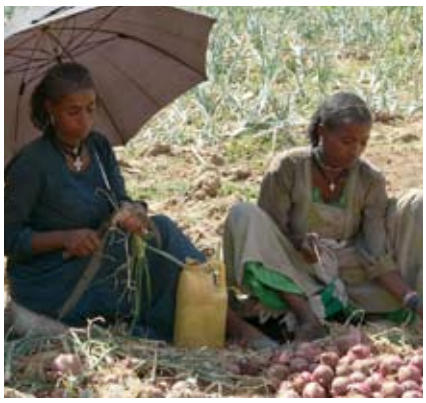
She first started with two bulls and was successful in the first cycle because she and the other farmers involved were linked to the market. She sold her fattened cattle with a profit of 3000 birr. She then bought two bulls to continue the business, but this time the market price was lower and her linkage with the market was weak. So she had to go on her own to sell the fattened animals, and made less profit. The income from this enterprise enabled her to buy a house in Gonder town. She increased her livestock number and now has 4 cows, 6 oxen and few goats. Enanye also processes milk and sells 42 kg of butter every 4 months.

After they saw her success, many women followed her footsteps. She claims the reason for her success is " hope and motivation". When her first husband passed away she realised that she was the only one for her children and started to shoulder all responsibilities in the house and on the field. Currently she has acquired additional land, so with her new husband they bought a water pump and are involved in vegetable production

'Farmers like me appreciate a lot the support given on market linkage and we need the support for the future'.

Encourage women to produce high value crops

Vegetable production is another male dominated enterprise in the project PLWs, as land and irrigation are usually controlled by men in male headed households. Even the female headed households usually have small land holdings and tend not to produce vegetables as they give priority for staple cereal crops. The majority of the female headed households give their land for share cropping in exchange for labour or oxen. In such cases, the type of crop to be grown is decided by the share cropper who is generally not interested to grow high value crops like vegetable with such kind of land arrangement where irrigation is also required.



W/ro Asesu: Selling onions in Alamata

W/ro Asesu is a single mom of a daughter. She is 35 and lives in Alamata. She used to grow cereals (mazie and tef) and eked out a living from one hectare. After seeing some male farmers who cultivated onion on a river side, she decided to use the irrigable land, which was gifted to her by relatives. She became a member of farmers cooperative. She received training on onion production and irrigation system organised by IPMS and used the knowledge she gained to increase production of onion from her land.

Once, W/ro Asesu has faced a challenge while she was working with the cooperative over onion price while she was trying to sell her onion with other members. Onion brokers from Mekele came to their village and wanted to buy all products from members at a cheaper price and make profit out of it. But Asesu, who had the knowledge of the price at that time, telephoned to Mekele to confirm the price they proposed. She was told that the price of onion was different from what these men proposed: it was birr 160.00 not birr 100.00 per quintal. So she shared this with her colleagues and they agreed not to sell the onion to the brokers. In the mean time she started discussing with another purchasing source with out the knowledge of the brokers, and finished the deal. Accordingly the new buyers arrived with their vehicle to load the product but the brokers and the local onion traders banned them from loading so they returned back. The broker and the local whole sellers were crossed with her, and tried to force her colleagues including her to sell their onion to them, but Asesu refused and went to Alamata, hired a car and sold her onion out of Gerjele with a better price.

In one harvest she earned a lot, so she bought a house which cost her 8,000.00 in Gerjele town, and household utensils including bed and mattress. She saved birr 8,000.00 in the Bank. She was also responsible to covers all expenses of the family.

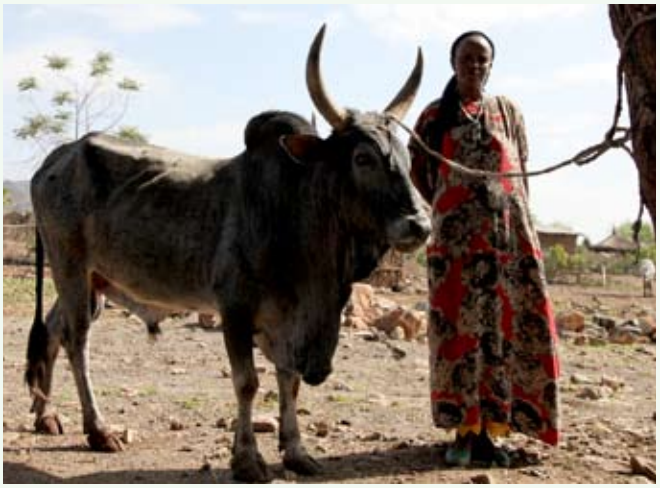
Moving up the ladder- from small to large enterprises

IPMS recognized that it is easier to target women for interventions in women dominated commodities such as poultry and dairy and shared commodities like small ruminants. Women feel confident about engaging in enterprises in which they have experience and have developed skills and knowledge regarding production and marketing of these commodities over time. Nevertheless, the project observed that when the women's capacity in business skills is developed, they tend to develop interest and confidence to diversify and start engaging in other new enterprises, often involving higher value commodities which are often dominated by men. For example, many women in Dale entered sheep fattening business right after selling the first round of pullets they produced. In Goma some women bought heifers with the revenue from the sale of fruit seedlings. In Miesso, half the women involved in goat fattening moved into cattle trading, investing the profits they made from goat fattening.

Realising this trend and responding to provide the support they require to make this transition, the project raised the amount of loan provided through the credit fund from 450 Birr to 1200 birr.

Alia Mohamed: Moving into cattle trading

Alia Mohamed is a 41 year old married woman with 6 children who lives in Miesso. As part of the IPMS interventions, she obtained a loan of 450 birr and a 7 day business skill and technical training on goat fattening jointly organized by IPMS, OCSSCo and OoPRD. Using the loan, she bought 2 goats for 430 birr from Beka market. She dewormed the goats and started to feed them maize flour, roasted sorghum and sorghum straw. After three months she sold the two goats for 800 birr. She then bought 4 goats for 900 birr and kept them for 3 months and sold four of them at 1600 birr. In the 3rd cycle, she decided to try cattle trading when she realized there was a high demand for cattle in the market. In addition, the price of goats she used to buy for fattening increased and she decided that her profit margin would decrease. Then she bought a bull and a goat for 1200 birr and 400 birr respectively. On the next market day (after a week) she sold the bull for 1500 birr in another market and got a net profit of 300 birr in a week. By doing that repeatedly she purchased and sold cattle 4 times in 2 months and made a net profit of 200-250 in each sale and got a total profit of 1100 Birr in 9 weeks. Motivated by her success, she purchased an ox for 3500 birr and fattened it for a month and sold it at 4500 Birr. After she repaid her loan in time, she obtained another loan of 1200 birr in March 2011, which helped her increase the volume of her business and she bought an ox at 6000 birr and expects to sell it for 8000 to 9000 birr after she fattens it in 3 months.



Conclusion

Any development program or actions including women as major actors will have a higher chance of success in improving livelihoods, fighting food insecurity and poverty alleviation.

While women are central to Ethiopian rural development, they typically receive an unequal share of the economic benefits from their efforts, an inequity particularly visible in the commercialization of agricultural commodities.

This IPMS project adopted calculated strategies in an attempt to ensure that a significant number of women targeted by the project benefitted from value-chain development. The project was more successful in some woredas than in others, but those in the project believe that the following ten recommendations stemming from this project apply broadly to the rural Ethiopian agricultural context.

Top ten recommendations for enhancing women's development through agriculture in Ethiopia

1 Change mindsets

Men and women at all levels need to change their traditional ways of working and begin to acknowledge the potential and need for actively involving women in Ethiopia's rural development.

2 Provide incentives

Increasing women's participation in trainings and skill development should be part of the development agents' performance evaluation criteria.

3 Set high, but realistic gender targets

At the beginning of development projects, set high but realistic targets for the numbers of women to be reached through the interventions.

4 Work with both men and women

Include both the head of the household and spouse in all gender development work so that men and women together can learn and give each other support in increasing household income, which should then give them both real incentives for increasing the decision-making power of the women.

5 Take a stepwise and flexible approach to gender issues

Projects targeting women should start with a focus on commodities such as dairy, small ruminant production, poultry raising, bee keeping and backyard fruit production, which have traditionally been the domain of women; as their incomes raise and capacity is built, they may then take on other more profitable enterprises such as cattle fattening.

6 Tailor training for women

When designing capacity building strategies aiming to enlarge women's participation in markets, take into account that women often lack the time, confidence, skills and networks that make it possible for them to participate in the training.

7 Facilitate input and services provision in the value-chain

Government should promote private sector and rural entrepreneurs development to provide inputs and services.

8 Link women to markets

Create opportunities that will involve women as well as men in market-led agricultural activities by, for example, bringing them into relevant discussions; attending to their concerns, needs and ambitions; and ensuring in particular that those ready to enter markets have the links and tools they need to do so.

9 Change self-perceptions

Help women to realise that they are a vital link in the agricultural value chain. As in many other parts of the world, rural Ethiopian women typically view themselves more as farm labourers than as household providers and income-earners. To change this will require women accessing more and better-quality information, being part of stronger networks as well as women who are entrepreneurial role models.

10 Scale out successes by adapting them to particular contexts

Agricultural interventions and options that work in one place will often not work in another unless the approach to the innovation as well as a given technology is also adapted appropriately to the new given context.

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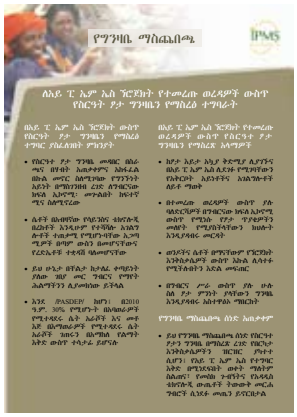
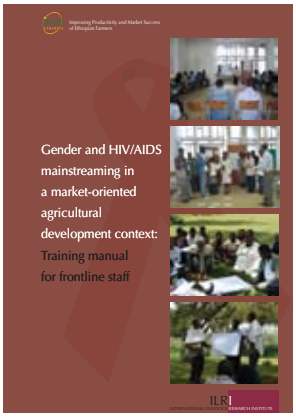
Research outputs and publications





For publications and other documents :
Project Website: http://www.ipms-ethiopia.org
Ethiopian Agriculture Portal: http:www.eap.gov.et

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